

CALVARY SOUTHERN MELBOURNE AND MORNINGTON REGION

MEMORY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Model

Calvary Residential Aged Care facilities in the Southern Melbourne and Mornington Region offer a specialist Memory Support Program (MSP) for residents living with dementia. The MSP is an evidence based approach to care with the goal of ensuring all residents live a high quality life and engage in meaningful activities to the best of their abilities to maximise their level of independence and dignity. In these facilities there is a strong culture of recognising the importance of and developing close relationships and partnership with the resident and their families to ensure their holistic needs, preferences and choices are met.

Background

A review of existing practices and best practice was conducted to identify contemporary models that will best meet the needs of people living with dementia in the Southern Melbourne and Mornington region. The review of existing practices highlighted key areas for improvement:

- Improve access to meaningful activities and programs to support residents with dementia to live more purposefully.
- Enhance staff knowledge, skills and experience to better meet the needs of people living with dementia.
- Build organisation wide capability to embed dementia care as part of core practice in the home.
- Reduce distress, anxiety and adverse events relating to people living with dementia including falls, depression, verbal and physical behaviors.
- Provide a dementia-friendly environment.

Following a global review of contemporary models, including those outlined on Dementia Australia website such as the Montessori program for aged care, a Memory Support Program (MSP) was developed.

What changed?

The MSP aimed at supporting people living with dementia to be engaged in meaningful and purposeful activities each day in a designated environment within the facility.

This program was piloted in April 2021 at Calvary Bayview and Calvary George Vowell facilities involving eight residents who were assessed and selected based on multiple criteria including each person's care needs, number and type of adverse events, resident and family meetings and feedback from other residents. Staff who were involved in running the program included lifestyle staff who completed the "Essentials of Dementia" training program offered by Dementia Training Australia. In October 2021 the MSP was introduced to a further two homes, Calvary Elanora and Calvary Rye Sands. Calvary Capel Sands have had their program introduced in November 2022.

The staff were not all convinced of the program's benefits until commencing the program. Post implementation, staff have recognised the changes to the residents' behavior, interactions and sense of purpose driven by daily activities becoming routine.

The program is delivered by lifestyle staff and care staff to increase capability and skill in dementia care. Despite challenges with COVID and workforce shortages, the program was implemented fully. Anecdotally, the program has been reported to have improved the quality of dementia care, resident and family health outcomes and experiences.

The other success of the MSP is the carry over effects from the staff skills and knowledge learnt from the MSP training and implementation. The staff are able to utilise the same techniques and skills for the residents when they are not attending the MSP as well as to support the other residents who may not be a part of the MSP.



Key features

Key features of the MSP include:

- Based on the [Montessori Dementia Program](#)¹ and Dementia Australia group activity plans²
- Requires a 6-8 week pre implementation period
- Simple to implement
- Conducted in a dedicated room that is modified to support the program
- Dementia design principles are used to inform the room modification
- Lifestyle and care workers are rostered on to conduct the program
- Personal care workers are allocated to practically assist e.g. toileting assistance
- 8 residents at any one time due to the size of the room and staffing levels
- Operates up to 7 days a week with variable times
- Adaptive depending on resources available
- Activity mapping and auditing of residents likes and dislikes are completed
- Activity maps are used to design the activity program based on resident preferences
- Residents eat all meals within the dedicated area and are involved with domestic tasks to set up and clear the tables
- Multicultural programs are often run on an iPad e.g. church services, cultural events



Resident Journey in the MSP

Resident selection

Residents are selected on the basis of

- responsive behaviours requiring specialist support e.g. aggressive, wandering, resistance to care,
- appearing disengaged and isolated.

8 residents are able to participate in the program at any one time due to the size of the allocated space in the room as well as staff availability.



Pre-program multidisciplinary meeting

Prior to entering the MSP, a multi-disciplinary team meeting is held including the resident and family member to discuss the residents holistic care needs, and interests so the team can adequately plan meaningful activities to engage them successfully in the program.

Mapping of Meaningful activities

A document is created listing all of the potential activities[^] and then mapped against each resident preferences based on their current and past interests. An activities program is then developed based on resident mix.

The activities available range from hands-on activities (e.g. gardening using mobile gardening beds), music, art and craft, general household duties (e.g. preparing food, washing up, vacuuming), building small items or activities related to residents part occupations.

Example of Activity Mapping

| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q |
|---------------|--|---|--------|-------|---------|-------------|-------------|-----------|------|----------|-------------|---------|-----------|-------|-------------|-------|
| Resident Name | Occupation | | Garden | Bingo | Outings | Classical M | Knitting/Lc | Motorbike | Dogs | Football | other sport | Cooking | Crossword | Coins | Bike riding | Music |
| Chris | Board of Works, Monash Uni Library, CSRIO | | x | | | x | x | x | | | | | | | | x |
| Jean | Worked in a Butcher Shop | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | x |
| Herbert | Plumber, Tool shop owner | | | | | | | | | x | x | | | | | x |
| Bob | Secretarial, drapery, MilkBar | | | x | | | | | | | | x | x | | | x |
| Bruce | Truck Driver, Milk Bar owner, life insurance | x | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x |
| Tim | Men's Barber Car Salesman | x | | | | | | | | x | x | | | | | x |
| Phillip | Cruise Ship Industry-Ship's Officer | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| Sue | Piano teacher at Mentone Grammer | | | | | x | | | x | | | | | | | x |
| Lyn | Tracer at British Railways | | x | x | x | | | | | | | | | | x | x |



As part of the consent process, families are encouraged to attend and observe the program in operation.

Staged introduction to program ensures a smooth transition and reduces anxiety and distress.

[^] Activities based on Dementia Australia Group Activity Plans²



Programs operate from 10am-6pm, 7 days per week. The program is run by lifestyle and care staff.

Additional care workers are allocated to support the program meals and continence management.



The program is conducted in a dedicated room that has been modified.




Residents eat all meals within the dedicated area. Residents are involved in an activity to set up and clear the tables.

Residents can leave the MSP any time during the day if they want to.



Residents will stop attending the program if their needs change such that they are no longer benefiting from attending. This may include when residents no longer experience responsive behaviours or they have become immobile.

Benefits of the MSP

| BENEFITS | |
|---|--|
| Residents  | Residents are offered meaningful and wellness activities to keep them engaged on a daily basis, tailored to each residents care plans. |
| | Improved dining experience and nutrition for residents engaged in the MSP as food intake has increased in an environment with less distractions (less back ground noise, less behavioral disruptions). |
| | Reduced wandering behaviors of residents participating in the MSP. |
| | Families of residents participating in MSP have reported reduced stress and greater peace of mind seeing the improved wellbeing and health of their loved ones. |
| Staff  | Strong emphasis on collaboration and information sharing between all staff about each resident’s preferences, stories and wishes to ensure this information is embedded and reflected in their care plan and the care they receive. |
| | Improved staff confidence and capability in providing better holistic and compassionate memory support and dementia care to residents involved in the MSP as well as all residents living in the home. |
| Organisation  | Residents are often assessed by other providers as not suitable for placement. Calvary sites with the MSP have been able to accept residents with complex behaviours as they are more equipped to manage the residents care needs with the MSP approach. This consequently reduces the need for patients to have extended stays in hospital awaiting a RACF bed. |
| | The MSP has successfully been implemented in 5 RACFs across the Southern Melbourne and Mornington Region. |
| | A regular meeting has been established with all 5 sites to discuss challenges and share learnings in the program. |



Reference list

1. <https://montessorifordementia.com.au/>
2. [Dementia Australia Group Activity Plans Resource](#)
(Note: this resource has been retired from the Dementia Australia website but is available via the Dementia Australia Library Catalogue)